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Women outpace men in attaining a higher education

More Australians are attaining non-school qualifications and the level of these qualifications is also increasing, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures released in the 2017 Survey of Education and Work.

The Program Manager of Education, Crime and Culture branch at the ABS, Stephen Collett, said: "Nearly two thirds of Australians aged between 20 and 64 years now hold a non-school qualification. Since 2004 this proportion has increased from 56 per cent to 66 per cent."

"The increasing attainment of higher level qualifications since 2004 is also very significant," Mr Collett said. "The proportion of Australians who have attained a Bachelor degree or above increased from 21 per cent to 31 per cent over this time."

The survey also showed that the number of women holding non-school qualifications continued to grow at a much faster rate than that of men. "Women have expanded the gap over men in attaining Bachelor degrees and above; and conversely, have caught up to men in attaining qualifications at Certificate III or above," Mr Collett said.

In May 2017, 35 per cent of women and 28 per cent of men attained a Bachelor degree or higher (in 2004 it was 22 per cent of women and 20 per cent of men). Meanwhile, 61 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men attained a Certificate III or higher (in 2004 it was 41 per cent for women and 52 per cent for men).

Further details are available in Education and Work, Australia, May 2017 (cat. no. 6227.0), available for free download from the ABS website <https://www.abs.gov.au>.

Media Note:

- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- Qualifications are formal courses of study listed in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): <https://www.aqf.edu.au/>.
- Non-school qualifications are attained by completing a vocational or tertiary course of study.
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